# Russian President and North Korean Leader Cement Alliance with Summit and Gift Exchange



On June 19, 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un solidified their countries' alliance with a summative event and mutual gift exchange during Putin's historic visit to Pyongyang. This visit marked the first time in 24 years that a Russian president has traveled to North Korea. The leaders celebrated their strengthened partnership with an elaborate ceremony featuring mass-choreographed performances, a 21-gun salute, and exchanges of extravagant gifts.

The Russian delegation presented Kim with a Russian-built Aurus limousine, a tea set, and an admiral’s dirk, while Kim reciprocated with a pair of Pungsan hunting dogs native to North Korea. This summit also involved extensive public displays of support, including massive portraits, red roses, and balloons at Kim Il Sung Square.

Amidst the festivities, the two nations signed a defense pact pledging mutual aid if either faces aggression. This pact comes as both countries experience growing international isolation and seek to bolster their defenses and economic ties.

The new agreement has stirred tensions in the region, prompting a response from South Korea. On June 21, 2024, South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest the pact, arguing that it could aid North Korea's military in ways that violate UN Security Council resolutions. This diplomatic dispute coincides with recent border tensions and provocative actions by North Korean troops, including brief incursions and threats of retaliation spurred by South Korean activists' anti-Pyongyang leafletting campaigns. South Korea has also hinted at potentially providing arms to Ukraine in response to Russia's invasion, further complicating regional dynamics.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged full compliance with international sanctions on North Korea, warning against any cooperation that could enhance its nuclear or ballistic missile capabilities. As regional players, including South Korea, the US, and Japan, react to these developments, the freshly minted Moscow-Pyongyang alliance remains under intense scrutiny.